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RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 3531  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 1752  
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SUBJECT: JORDANIAN VIEWS ON JAPAN'S "CORRIDOR OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY" IN PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

REFS A) TOKYO 1005 B) TOKYO 6576

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Jordan has been discussing a number of Jordan Valley projects with the Israelis over the past several years. Several would be contingent upon financial support from Japan. All are likely to be discussed in the four-party talks between Japan, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Territory being held in Tokyo March 14. The proposals include constructing a bridge, creating rail links between Israel and Jordan, and implementing a comprehensive plan to develop the Palestinian side of the Jordan Valley through constructing industrial facilities and promoting agricultural industries. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) In Israeli press reports, Vice Premier Shimon Peres refers to the Japanese initiative as the "Peace Valley" plan, but Japanese press reports use the name "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity." Four party talks between Japan, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority are being held in Tokyo March 14. According to press reports, projects under consideration will include the Red Sea-Dead Sea water conveyance, tourism projects, a joint Israeli-Jordanian airport at Aqaba, eventual integration of industrial complexes and goods distribution centers in the Jordan Valley, and promoting agricultural industries in the Jordan Valley targeting Gulf markets.

13. (SBU) Amr Al-Hadidi, the Secretary General of Jordan's Ministry of Transportation, told ECOUNS March 13 that there have been discussions with the Israelis over the past two years on building a new bridge between Israel and Jordan. The bridge would be in the southern Jordan Valley near the Allenby Bridge, also known as the King Hussein crossing. Both parties hope Japan could help fund construction of the bridge but the Japanese government has so far made no commitments.

14. (SBU) In addition, the Jordanian government is completing a railway master plan which should be completed by April. As part of this plan, a feasibility study is being carried out looking at establishing rail links with Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Israel. Al-Hadidi has met with Israel's Secretary General for Transportation to discuss the proposal. However, Al-Hadidi said the Jordanians were exploring the Israeli rail link option quietly because of concern that the Syrians and Saudis "might be hesitant" if they learn of the planned rail links to Israel. Al-Hadidi added that the plan would be based on standard gauge track, not the narrow gauge track currently existing in Jordan (from the famous Hejaz Railway).

15. (SBU) According the Jordan office of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the JICA offices in Tel Aviv and the West Bank have been directly involved in developing the plan. However, he did assert that the Tokyo talks would review the proposed

comprehensive plan for the Palestinian side of the Jordan Valley.  
JICA would be involved in financing projects under the plan if the  
four parties reach agreement in the talks.

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